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For further information about this booklet contact Charles Hobbs, editor, News Division, Office of Public Affairs, Room 406-A, U.S Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250 or call (202) 720-4026.

Release No. 0212.93
Mary Dixon (202) 720-4623

Remarks

by
Mike Espy
Secretary of Agriculture
to the North American Wildlife & Natural Resources Conference
Washington, D.C.

March 22, 1993

RESTORING CONSERVATION LEADERSHIP AT USDA

Good morning ladies and gentlemen.

I am honored to be here to join you for the 58th North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference. I am particularly pleased to appear with my colleague and friend Secretary Babbitt.

As Bruce has already indicated, there is a new spirit in Washington. And a new philosophy when it comes to government and to natural resource and environmental issues. Part of that comes from a renewed commitment on the part of USDA and the Department of the Interior to work together to solve resource management problems instead of create new ones. Bruce and I are committed to that purpose. Government can be part of the solution to the natural resource problems we face.

This morning I want to discuss the role that USDA can and will play in promoting conservation and stewardship of the forest, range, and crop lands of the United States. In addition, I'll elaborate on the subject of coordination and cooperation among natural resource agencies -- in USDA and with other Departments agencies of the government. Finally, I'd like to discuss, in greater detail, improvements I intend to make in how USDA goes about its business in conservation and forestry.

USDA Leadership in Conservation

The Department of Agriculture has a long and proud tradition of leadership in conservation and forestry. The Soil Conservation Service and the Forest Service have played significant roles in protecting soils, water quality, fish and wildlife habitat, and forests and rangelands. In addition, the natural resource program of the Extension Service and the conservation programs of the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service have also had an important hand in shaping the conservation landscape.

The USDA Forest Service manages 191 million acres of forests, rangelands, and grasslands in the National Forest System. These public lands play an essential role in meeting the timber and non-timber resource needs of the Nation. Fully half of the Nation's softwood timber and half of the Nation's big game and cold water fisheries are on national forest lands. In addition, 75 percent of the water in the West originates in the national forests.

The Forest Service's State and Private Forestry Program provides protection from fire, insects, and disease for millions more acres of state and private forests. Its urban and cooperative forestry programs are the principle source of information and technical assistance for guiding management decisions affecting private, non-industrial, and municipal forests across the nation. The Forest Service Research Program is the premier natural resource research program in the world, providing the scientific support and guidance affecting all aspects of resource management. The International Forestry Program is rapidly becoming the world leader in providing scientific and technical support for international resource management programs.

The Soil Conservation Service shares similar notoriety as a world leader in conservation. As a source of technical support to farmers, ranchers, and others, SCS provides outstanding leadership in tackling tough issues like non-point source pollution, wetland protection, and watershed restoration and management.

The ASCS administers cost-share programs to aid farmers in making conservation investments. It also directs implementation of the Conservation Reserve and Wetland Reserve Programs. The former has proven to be a highly successful tool for preventing erosion of highly erodible and environmentally-sensitive farm land. The latter holds great promise to aid in restoring agricultural wetlands.

Finally, the natural resource program of the USDA Extension Service has provided valuable information and assistance to thousands of farmers, ranchers, and woodland owners to guide them in making environmentally-sound management decisions.

Unfortunately, however, these agencies and their programs have suffered in recent years. The Forest Service, for example, has been maligned for too narrow a focus on timber and too little attention to the non-timber resources it is entrusted to manage. The Soil Conservation Service has been accused of caring too much for the concerns of the farmer and too little for the needs of the soil and water resources in its care. Both agencies have suffered from a lack of clear direction, a clear signal of where they are to head in fulfilling their conservation and stewardship roles. Its time for a change.

We recognize that today's conservation challenges are significant. Issues like the conflict over protection and management of old-growth forests; reducing agriculture's impacts on water quality; and protecting wetlands are complex and controversial. However, with these challenges come important opportunities to affect changes in the conservation and stewardship of our the forests, fields, and waters.

The Department of Agriculture has the people, the expertise, and the responsibility to provide the leadership in conservation that has been lacking in recent years. We look forward to fulfilling that role.

Coordination and Cooperation in Conservation

Our greatest challenge in USDA is to get the many agencies and programs of the Department which can affect natural resources and the environment working together to promote stewardship of these resources for present and future generations. In a Department consisting of 42 agencies and 124,000 employees, with representatives operating in every county of the nation, it is not unusual to find that programs and priorities can, at times, operate at cross purposes. This must come to an end. Instead, we must work together --with a common vision -- to ensure that the resource and conservation implications of all programs in the Department are understood.

I have given considerable thought to reorganizing USDA to improve the coordination of key programs and to improve the visibility of the Department in dealing with critical agriculture issues. One area in which this coordination and visibility is critical is in natural resources and environment.

It is critically important that American agriculture -- and USDA -- step up to the task of dealing with the environmental problems that agriculture can create. Clearly, many farmers have done so. Others, with the right information, and proper assistance, will do the same. However, USDA must continue to provide needed leadership to achieve these goals. I am certain if we do so, that the conservation record of American agriculture will continue to improve.

Cooperation and coordination with our sister agencies in the Department of the Interior and with the Environmental Protection Agency, is essential if improvements in conservation and land stewardship are to occur.

It is inconceivable to me that different agencies of the Federal government can operate on the basis of different policies in dealing with common natural resources problems. Its inappropriate, its inefficient, and it sends the wrong message to the people we serve as stewards of their natural resources.

Of course, the best example of the failure of this kind of management is the situation now confronting the Pacific Northwest region as it affects old-growth forests, associated fish and wildlife, and the people and the communities who rely on these resources. The Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and the Fish and Wildlife Service share responsibility for the public land resources of the region. Yet, at times during the past four years, it often appeared that they

were headed in opposite -- or at least strongly divergent -- directions in terms of policy and management direction. This must change.

As I noted earlier, Bruce Babbitt and I are committed to working together to address issues of common concern. We will do so in identifying issues, in assessing options, and in implementing programs and policies on the ground -- where it matters. As President Clinton has made clear, government can be a part of the solution. But only, I would add, when government is smart and efficient and working together.

Improving USDA's Conservation and Forestry Programs

I am committed to making needed improvements in the ways that USDA fulfills its conservation mission and stewardship role. Several concepts will guide our efforts to make these improvements.

First, at USDA we will emphasize the need to serve our customers better. During the campaign, Governor Clinton emphasized his desire to make USDA more farmer friendly. I intend to follow-up on that commitment.

But USDA has many customers, in addition to farmers and ranchers. All of you here this morning, are customers of USDA. And not simply because you eat. Those of you who care about a clean and healthy environment -- whether you're a rural resident or from a city or suburb -- are USDA customers as well. We intend to serve you, too.

Second, I believe that sound policy must be based on sound science. USDA has the capability -- more than any other entity -- to do the research needed to establish the factual basis for making informed policy and program decisions. We must strengthen the linkage between research and management so that our policies have this strong scientific foundation.

Third, we must look beyond the immediate effects of management decisions to be sure that we understand the ramifications on both a spacial and temporal basis. Simply stated, we need to see the forest for the trees and be sure that today's fix does not create tomorrow's problem.

This concept has immediate application in dealing with the old-growth issue. But it also has ramifications for how we deal with conservation and water quality concerns.

Last year Forest Service Chief Dale Robertson announced the agency's commitment to ecosystem management. Similarly, the Soil Conservation Service has pioneered efforts to promote watershed-based planning for conservation strategies. We must strengthen these efforts and develop the information base to fully implement these strategies. But, as a part of this effort, we must also commit the resources needed to monitor our actions, to measure our progress over time. Strategies like ecosystem management and watershed planning are for the long term. We must establish the capability to be certain that we are accomplishing what we set out to do, and to take corrective measures when it appears that we have strayed off course.

A fourth concept that should guide our conservation and forestry programs is the concept of sustainability. Management strategies -- be they for agricultural lands or forests -- can only be effective if they lead to sustainable production of the goods and services which the land provides. Sustainable production, in turn, can provide the basis for sustaining the economies of rural communities and provide them with a more certain future.

Fifth, I strongly believe that management is an effective tool for dealing with the nation's natural resource problems. Too often, advocates propose to limit management options as a way of solving problems. Too often, debate over forestry issues has focussed simply on which lands to manage and which to preserve. The problem with this approach is that as our land base shrinks the conflicts over management of remaining lands intensifies. Management strategies that include the preservation of environmentally-sensitive or ecologically-significant lands should be part of the solution, but not the only solution.

Sixth, management strategies must be adaptive. That is, with the research and monitoring to back it up, management should respond to changing conditions and be sufficiently flexible to be able to change as conditions change. For example, it wasn't too long ago that standard management practice was to eliminate downed timber and woody debris from streams as a fishery management practice. Subsequent research showed that it was better to leave this material in streams to provide needed habitat. Current management reflects that viewpoint -- i.e., changes were made to adapt to new information.

A seventh criteria that will guide all our natural resource and conservation programs and policies is that they simply comply with existing law.

Number eight. I intend to ensure that we take full advantage of opportunities to develop partnerships, where appropriate, with the private sector. For example, the wetland acquisition program of Ducks Unlimited and the federal Wetland Reserve Program could work jointly to protect important wetland resources. Additionally, the land protection activities of the Nature Conservancy and other state and local conservation groups could aid the Forest Service in acquiring important and desirable forest tracts.

While representing the 2nd Congressional district of Mississippi, I worked closely with the Nature Conservancy to establish the Dahomey National Wildlife Refuge. Past efforts like this demonstrate the benefit of public/private partnerships. I will seek to expand these efforts to help promote an effective and efficient strategy for land acquisitions.

Ninth, I will seek to ensure that common sense guides us in the development and implementation of our conservation programs. By this, I mean that rules and regulations should be customer-oriented and "user-friendly", be guided by common sense. This is critically important if we expect farmers and ranchers to take the initiative to address agricultural conservation concerns.

Finally, we must restore public faith in resource management professionals and their ability to serve as stewards of the land. USDA is blessed to have two agencies with the expertise and experience that SCS and the Forest Service brings to natural resource and conservation issues. We must reestablish the credibility of these agencies and empower these professionals to use their knowledge and skills in dealing with these issues. If so, I am convinced that the Nation's natural resources will benefit and the public's faith will be restored.

Summary

In closing, let me say that I believe USDA has the capability to move aggressively to deal with many of the natural resource and environmental problems facing our Nation. We have the resources, the professional expertise, and the will to get the job done. I look forward to serving you and the people of this great Nation in leading USDA to achieve this important goal.



News Releases-

Release No. 0205.93

Joe O'Neill (202) 720-4323

Diane O'Connor (202) 720-4026

USDA GUARANTEES \$6.9 MILLION LOAN FOR FARMLAND PROTECTION IN VERMONT

WASHINGTON, March 19--The U.S. Department of Agriculture will guarantee a \$6,875,000 loan in 1993 to help keep Vermont farmland from being converted to other purposes, and pay part of the interest on the loan.

Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy said the loan to Vermont's Housing and Conservation Board will provide further financing for the Farms for the Future demonstration program to preserve farmland resources for future generations. USDA's Farmers Home Administration guaranteed a \$10 million loan for this program in 1992, including interest payments.

"We must protect America's vital farm resources from the pressures of encroaching development," Espy said. "The demonstration program financed by these loans is a step toward achieving that goal. It will help Vermont maintain a viable farming community, now and in the future."

"This Farms for the Future announcement means almost \$3 million more to Vermont over the next five years," said Senator Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.), Chairman of the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee. "These funds will help farmers pass their farms along to their sons and daughters, and prevent the farms from being converted to non-farm purposes. Combined

with the funds from last year, we can guarantee at least 50 more farms will be able to stay in farming."

The Vermont Housing and Conservation Board uses the Farms for the Future loans to purchase development rights on quality farms. The program helps finance reinvestments in farm infrastructure, farm expansion, and the transfer of farms to the next generation.

The "Farms for the Future" Agricultural Resource Conservation Demonstration Program was authorized by the 1990 Food, Agriculture, Conservation and Trade Act. USDA's Farmers Home Administration guarantees loans made by commercial lenders, and pays part of the interest on the loans.



Release No. 0206.93

Robert Feist (202) 720-6789

Phil Villa-Lobos (202) 720-4026

USDA RELEASES SWEETENER MARKET DATA REPORT FOR OCTOBER-DECEMBER 1992

WASHINGTON, March 19--The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Commodity Credit Corporation today released its Sweetener Market Data report for October - December 1992.

Report totals, in short tons (2,000 pounds), include:

- Oct. 1, 1992 sugar stocks - 1,450,162.
- U.S. beet sugar production for October-December 1992 - 2,172,192.
- U.S cane sugar production for October-December 1992 - 1,755,746.
- Deliveries for October-December 1992 - 2,297,206, including deliveries for domestic human consumption - 2,267,709.
- Jan. 1, 1993 sugar stocks - 3,220,207.

Copies of the October-December 1992 Sweetener Market Data report are available from the Sweeteners Analysis Division, ASCS/USDA, Room 3727-S, P.O. Box 2415, Washington, D.C. 20013; tel: (202) 720-3391; FAX (202) 720-8261.



Release No. 0207.93

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Edwin Moffett (202) 720-4026

USDA WITHDRAWS CHANGE TO ANIMAL DISEASE STATUS OF SPAIN

WASHINGTON, March 22--The U.S. Department of Agriculture today withdrew a recent ruling declaring Spain free of swine vesicular disease (SVD), a viral disease of swine.

"With this emergency revision, we are removing references to SVD from the final import rules on animal products from Spain published in the Feb. 25 Federal Register. The status of Spain as being free of hog cholera, rinderpest and foot-and-mouth disease remains unchanged," said Billy G. Johnson, deputy administrator of veterinary services in USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

SVD, which causes blisters on the hooves, snout and mouth of swine, is not known to exist in the United States. The Office International des Epizooties, an organization managing animal health information for international trade purposes, has notified APHIS of a recent outbreak of SVD in Spain, Johnson said.

The Feb. 25 final rule removed import restrictions on Spanish dairy products and ruminant meat, which will not be affected by the revision.

This action was effective on publication in the March 15 Federal Register.



Release No. 0208.93
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ESPY NAMES MEMBERS TO NATIONAL POTATO PROMOTION BOARD

WASHINGTON, March 22--Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy today announced 19 new appointments and 16 reappointments to the National Potato Promotion Board.

Newly appointed are Gary D. Jensen, Weldona, Colo.; Edward M. Baker, Middletown, Del.; Randel J. Brown, Murtaugh, Idaho; Paul H. Duncan, Rupert, Idaho; Weston D. Farris, Glens Ferry, Idaho; Brent A. Funk, Hansen, Idaho; Randall A. Miyasako, Wilder, Idaho; Kenneth G. Nickell, Blackfoot, Idaho; Richard M. Johnson, Grafton, N.D.; Michael J. Jorde, Cando, N.D.; DeeAnn G. Amstad, Stanfield, Ore.;

Jim K. Baggenstos, Aloha, Ore.; Edward D. Ingram II, Plainview, Texas; Kevin E. Coats, Holden, Utah; Roger D. Hawley, Bellingham, Wash.; Randy R. Mullen, Pasco, Wash.; John K. Stahl Jr., Ritzville, Wash.; Donald G. Underhill, Warden, Wash.; and Conroy J. Soik, Junction City, Wis.

Reappointed are Rex B. Creswell, Henagar, Ala.; Jerry W. Smith, Blanca, Colo.; H. Alan Funk, Aberdeen, Idaho; Byron L. Reed, Idaho Falls, Idaho; James B. Tiede, American Falls, Idaho; W. Jeffrey Walters, Rexburg, Idaho; Thomas D. Langan, Muscatine, Iowa; John B. Crawford, Lakeview, Mich.; Jerome R. Edling, Clear Lake, Minn.; Alan D. Collette, Grafton, N.D.; David A. Cacka, Malin, Ore.; Manuel J. Borges, Middletown, R.I.; H. Bruce Richardson, Capeville, Va.; James N. Nelson, LaConner, Wash.; Tom C. Solbrack, Othello, Wash.; and John F. Wolter, Antigo, Wis.

All of the above appointees will serve three-year terms beginning March 1 and expiring Feb. 29, 1996.

Authorized under the 1971 Potato Research and Promotion Act, the board is composed of members appointed by the secretary of agriculture from nominations made by potato producers. The board is currently made up of 91 potato producers and one public member. Board membership is based on the amount of potato production in each state.

The Potato Board administers an industry-funded research and promotion program to increase domestic potato consumption and U.S. potato exports.

USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service monitors the operations of the board.



Release No. 0209.93
Bruce Merkle (202) 720-8206
Phil Villa-Lobos (202) 720-4026

USDA ANNOUNCES CHANGES IN PRICE SUPPORT PROGRAM REGULATIONS

WASHINGTON, March 22--The U.S. Department of Agriculture is seeking comments on an interim rule which proposes changes in the price support programs for wheat, feed grains, rice, oilseeds, farm-stored peanuts and honey, said Randy Weber, acting executive vice president of USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation.

The provisions are:

-- Persons having an interest in the storing, marketing or purchasing of commodities are no longer prohibited from acting as the producer's agent.

-- Two or more producers may obtain a joint loan deficiency payment (LDP) for a commodity commingled in the same storage facility, and each producer is jointly liable for obligations set forth in the documents for obtaining an LDP.

-- To be eligible for price support benefits, a producer must retain title and risk of loss in the commodity and control of the commodity.

-- CCC will no longer require a producer to obtain a lease agreement when commodities are stored in leased space.

-- The deduction of the national soybean assessment will be made at the time CCC acquires the soybeans.

- New administrative actions for violations involving incorrect certification, unauthorized removal and unauthorized disposition will relieve the producer from repaying the outstanding loan for which the violation occurred while maintaining eligibility for future farm-stored loans.
 - CCC will make available loans at a rate reduced for quality discounts on grain otherwise not eligible to be pledged as loan collateral because of quality.
 - A producer may designate, at the time of loan request, additional storage structures that may be used for storage of the loan collateral. A producer will be able to move loan collateral among these designated structures without prior written approval from the county Agricultural Stabilization Committee.
 - CCC now defines the mortgaged quantity to be the same as the loan quantity. Therefore, the quantity CCC will accept into inventory for settlement of a farm-stored loan is 110 percent of the outstanding farm-stored loan quantity.
 - A producer may lock in a loan repayment rate under the marketing loan provisions when a producer obtains Form CCC 681-1 requesting to release loan collateral for sale.
 - The rice market loan repayment rate is on the national average milling yield for 1992 and subsequent crop years.
 - A producer who would lose beneficial interest at the time of delivery of a commodity, except honey, to a warehouse, buyer, processor, or cooperative, may request a loan deficiency payment on or before harvest for a quantity of the commodity which would otherwise be ineligible because of the loss of such beneficial interest.
 - When a honey producer obtains a loan deficiency payment in lieu of obtaining a price support loan, CCC will waive the requirement that the honey be stored in approved containers.
 - Honey producers may obtain loans and loan deficiency payments based on 100 percent of the net quantity shown on eligible disposition evidence if the evidence is submitted within 30 calendar days after date of sale.
 - CCC will allow honey producers to deliver a complete barrel of honey, instead of splitting a barrel, if the quantity delivered would exceed the 110 percent quantity limitation.
- The interim rule was published in the March 18 Federal Register. Comments must be received by April 19 and should be sent to: Director, Cotton, Grains and Rice Price Support Division, USDA/ASCS, PO Box 2415, Washington, D.C. 20013. Comments will be available for public inspection during business hours, Room 3623-S, 14th St. and Independence Ave., S.W.



Release No. 0210.93
 Sally Klusaritz (202) 720-3448
 Diane O'Connor (202) 720-4026

U.S. TO DONATE CORN TO RUSSIAN FEDERATION

WASHINGTON, March 22--Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy today announced the United States will donate 210,000 metric tons of corn to the Russian Federation.

"The United States continues to support the measures the Russian Federation is carrying out to expand the rule of the private sector and improve its food assistance programs," Espy said.

The \$20 million donation will be sold in Russia through private marketing channels. Proceeds from the sale will be used to pay for transportation, handling and storage of the commodity, and for developmental activities in agriculture and food processing.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture will pay for all ocean transportation. In accordance with cargo preference requirements, 75 percent of the commodities will be shipped on U.S. flag vessels.

The Russian Federation will pay for transportation, handling, storage and distribution costs within Russia.

The donation will be made under Section 416(b) of the Agricultural Act of 1949, which authorizes the donation of surplus commodities owned by USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation to developing countries. The program is administered by FAS.

The supply period of the donation is fiscal 1993.

For more information, contact James F. Keefer, USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service, at (202) 720-5263.



Release No. 0211.93

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MISSISSIPPI MAN CHARGED WITH ILLEGALLY TAMPERING WITH FOOD PRODUCTS

WASHINGTON, March 22--The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced that a former employee of a poultry products processing plant in Mississippi was arrested today for illegally tampering with food products by inserting straight pins into boneless chicken breasts.

USDA's Acting Inspector General Charles R. Gillum said Brian C. Pickens, 18, of 208 South Spring Street, Waynesboro, Miss., was indicted March 18 on one felony count for allegedly inserting metal straight pins into boneless chicken breasts at the Wayne Farms processing plant, Laurel, Miss., where he was employed as a chicken breast roller.

The production line at the processing plant was able to detect the pins; thus, all of the chicken product containing straight pins was intercepted by USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service inspectors before leaving the plant.

A Federal Grand Jury in Jackson, Miss., indicted Pickens on one count of product tampering. If convicted, he could receive a maximum sentence of 3--years in prison, a fine of \$10,000, or both.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Jack B. Lacy, Southern District of Mississippi, Jackson. No trial date has been set.

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Release No. 0213.93

Mary Dixon (202) 720-4623

ESPY VOWS USDA AS A TEAM PLAYER IN PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT

WASHINGTON, March 22--Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy today put the support of the U.S. Department of Agriculture behind President Clinton's environmental and natural resource agenda.

"There is a new spirit and a new philosophy in Washington," Espy told an audience at the North American Wildlife & Natural Resources Conference. "When it comes to government and to natural resource and environmental issues, we are committed on the part of USDA and the Department of the Interior to work together for a change to solve resource management problems, instead of creating new ones."

Espy told those attending the conference at the Omni Shoreham Hotel that USDA will take an active role in promoting conservation and stewardship of the forest, range and crop lands across the country.

"I believe USDA has the capability to move aggressively to deal with many of the natural resource and environmental problems facing our nation," Espy said. "We have the resources, the professional expertise, and the will to get the job done."

Commenting on the role that USDA and the agriculture community play in environmental discussions, Espy added, "It is critically important that American agriculture--and USDA--step up to the task of dealing with the environmental problems that agriculture can create. Clearly, many farmers have done so. Others with the right information, and proper assistance, will do the same. However, USDA must continue to provide needed leadership to achieve these goals. I am certain if we do so, that the conservation record of American agriculture will continue to improve."

In addition, Espy said he will work to ensure that the many programs of the department's 42 agencies work toward similar goals and do not contradict one another. He said the old problem of programs operating at cross purposes "must come to an end."

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NOTE TO EDITORS: Full text of Espy's remarks (release #0212.93) are available from the News Division, Office of Public Affairs, USDA, room 404A, Washington, D.C. 20250; telephone (202) 720-4026.

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Release No. 0214.93

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Leslie Parker (202) 720-4026

GLOBAL CHANGE ON THE RANGE COULD BOOST--OR REDUCE--BEEF PRODUCTION

WASHINGTON, Feb. 23--Some cattle ranchers may be helped--and others hurt--by expected environmental changes that would affect temperatures and forage growth on the Great Plains, according to computer projections by U.S. Department of Agriculture scientists.

Atmospheric carbon dioxide concentrations are expected to double during the next 50 years, said range scientist Jon D. Hanson with USDA's Agricultural Research Service. Some range plants grow better in elevated CO₂, tests have shown.

In general, the higher CO₂ levels would increase forage growth on the Northern and Central Plains states, enabling ranchers in those areas to raise more beef. But further south, higher temperatures accompanying the elevated CO₂ levels could lead to heat stress in current breeds, with the potential to lower beef production there.

"These projections offer clues on how ranchers can modify their operations to get the most from beneficial effects of rising CO₂ levels, and offset unfavorable effects that might affect their herd health and production," said Hanson.

He and ARS ecologist Barry B. Baker are using computer models to investigate the complex response of grazing animals and range plants to future climate changes.

"We want to do this now so ranchers will have plenty of time to prepare for and adapt to the changes in store," said Hanson, at ARS' Great Plains System Research Unit, Fort Collins, Colo.

"For example, if climatic changes become unfavorable for some areas of the Great Plains, ranchers can change the number of livestock on their ranches, the time of grazing and even the type of the grazing species," Hanson said in a story in the latest issue of Agricultural Research magazine.

In areas where high temperatures might cause heat stress, Baker said, ranchers could use breeds that are more heat tolerant.

"For example, they could rely more on Brahman-type cattle, the species known as *Bos indicus*," he said. "This species has more heat tolerance than *Bos taurus*, which includes breeds such as Hereford and Angus."

At one simulation site in Rosebud County in southeastern Montana, ranchers can expect about a 65 percent increase in forage production. Baker said the extra forage available to cows would enable them to produce calves weighing six percent more at weaning time.

But weaning weights in the Texas panhandle may drop three to four percent, despite a nine to 12 percent increase in forage production, the researchers found. They believe the weight reduction will be due to greater heat stress on the calves' mothers.

To obtain weather data for the simulations, Hanson and Baker combined historical data at 24 weather stations from Montana to Texas with predictions from the General Circulation Model developed by NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies. The Goddard model simulates effects on climate as a result of changes in CO₂ levels.

The ARS scientists coupled their weather simulations to a computerized geographic information system. This enabled them to produce maps showing the importance of environmental change to

421 rural counties in the 10 Great Plains states. Key to this was a range dependency index that tied the importance of rangeland production to rural incomes in 964 counties from the Canadian border south to Mexico.



Release No. 0215.93
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USDA ANNOUNCES PREVAILING WORLD MARKET RICE PRICES

WASHINGTON, March 23--Acting Under Secretary of Agriculture Charles J. O'Mara today announced the prevailing world market prices of milled rice, loan rate basis, as follows:

- long grain whole kernels, 7.72 cents per pound;
- medium grain whole kernels, 6.90 cents per pound;
- short grain whole kernels, 6.89 cents per pound;
- broken kernels, 3.86 cents per pound.

Based upon these prevailing world market prices for milled rice, loan deficiency payment rates and gains from repaying price support loans at the world market price level are:

- for long grain, \$1.90 per hundredweight;
- for medium grain, \$1.79 per hundredweight;
- for short grain, \$1.79 per hundredweight.

The prices announced are effective today at 3 p.m. EST. The next scheduled price announcement will be made March 30 at 3 p.m. EST.



Release No. 0216.93
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TURKEY ELIGIBLE FOR MORE WHEAT UNDER EXPORT ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

WASHINGTON, March 23--Acting Under Secretary of Agriculture Charles J. O'Mara today announced an opportunity for sales of an additional 200,000 metric tons of U.S. wheat to Turkey under the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Export Enhancement Program.

Sales of wheat will be made to buyers in Turkey through normal commercial channels at competitive world prices. The export sales will be facilitated through payment of bonuses by USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation. The subsidy will enable U.S. exporters to compete at commercial prices in the Turkish market.

This allocation will be valid until June 30. Details of the program, including an invitation for offers from exporters, will be issued in the near future.

For more information call Richard J. Chavez, (202) 720-5540, or Larry McElvain, (202) 720-6211.



Release No. 0217.93
Steve Kinsella (202) 720-4623

ESPY CALLS ETHANOL TAX EXEMPTION A VICTORY FOR FARMERS

WASHINGTON, March 23--Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy today called the decision of President Clinton to exempt ethanol from the proposed BTU tax a major victory for American farmers.

"The decision to exempt ethanol from the proposed BTU tax is a clear sign from President Clinton that he views ethanol as a fuel of the future that will make this nation less dependent on foreign oil while strengthening rural America," Espy said.

Espy, who has been a long-time advocate of ethanol, said the development of this alternative fuel fits into his efforts to find new markets and uses for agricultural products.

At a speech before the American Corn Growers Association last weekend in Kansas City and again today before the National Grain and Feed Association, Espy said that by exempting ethanol the stakes are clear.

"We are not about to fall prey to a false choice between prosperity and the environment. We know what the stakes are: cleaner air, new jobs, increased farm income and a better balance of trade.

"The president is setting a prime example of how agricultural and environmental interests can merge. We must avoid the false choices."

Studies have shown that for every 100 million bushels of corn moved to produce ethanol, the price of corn rises four to six cents a bushel. In addition, for every one-cent increase in the price of corn per bushel, the federal government saves \$50 million in corn-farm-program costs.



Release No. 0218.93
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SOIL SENSOR LOWERS HERBICIDE USE

WASHINGTON, March 24--A new soil sensor can help farmers identify parts of fields that need less herbicide, reducing chances for water contamination, a U.S. Department of Agriculture researcher said.

E. Eugene Alberts of USDA's Agricultural Research Service said the sensor, patented jointly by the agency and an Illinois firm, reads light reflected by soil. Since organic matter absorbs light, less light reflected back to the surface means more organic matter.

Field spots with the least organic matter require the least herbicide, said Alberts, research leader of the ARS Cropping Systems and Water Quality Laboratory in Columbia, Mo.

He said ARS researchers in Columbia and Urbana, Ill., developed the sensor. They are collaborating with the Illinois firm in preparing the sensor for commercial use.

An ARS scientist at Urbana is also working on another sensor, Alberts said, to help farmers accurately "prescribe" nitrogen fertilizer applications for specific soils and crops.

He said the sensors are one of the latest developments in "prescription farming"--applying varying amounts of pesticides and fertilizers according to soil conditions and plant needs in different spots within a field.

"Crop yields can vary in different parts of the same field," he said. "If farmer's fertilize the entire field for the same expected yield, they often are overusing fertilizer in some parts and underusing it elsewhere."

Dale Bucks, the ARS national program leader for water quality, said the sensor research at Alberts' lab and at Urbana is being undertaken as part of a national water quality initiative involving USDA, other federal agencies and state universities. Bucks summarized other ARS lab findings that were reported recently at a national conference held in Minneapolis on the water quality initiative:

* James S. Schepers, a soil scientist at an ARS lab in Lincoln, Neb., said he has developed ways to use a commercial chlorophyll meter to accurately spot nitrogen deficiencies in plants. Farmers who irrigate can trim their initial fertilizer applications, knowing they can check for nitrogen and add more to the water later if needed, he said. "Some extension agents and agribusiness consultants already have meters to test crops."

Schepers said he and colleagues are also studying the quality of light reflected by crops to develop a way to aerially map fields for the status of plant nitrogen.

* Robert H. Dowdy, research leader at an ARS lab in St. Paul, Minn., said aerial mapping of soil and yield differences "should allow farmers on-the-spot computerized highlighting of areas within their fields that require an automatic adjustment of chemical rates."

* Jerry Hatfield, director of the ARS National Soil Tilth Laboratory at Ames, Iowa, reported that mapping various nitrogen levels on fields "enables farmers to vary application rates of swine manure so none is wasted."

* Norman R. Fausey, an agency research leader at Columbus, Ohio, said he has found that using drainage pipes to irrigate below ground as well as to channel water from poorly drained soils resulted in a 60-percent increase in corn and soybean yields while improving water quality.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: For details, contact Dale Bucks, national program leader, Water Quality and Water Management, USDA, ARS, Beltsville, Md. 20705, telephone (301) 504-7034. Also, E. Eugene Alberts, research leader, Cropping Systems and Water Quality Research, Columbia, Md. 65211, telephone (314) 882-1144.

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Release No. 0219.93

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GOVERNMENT EARMARKS \$25 MILLION IN EXXON VALDEZ OIL SPILL FINES FOR ALASKAN HABITAT RESTORATION

WASHINGTON, March 24--Some \$25 million in penalties collected from Exxon Corp. for environmental damage caused by grounding of its tanker Exxon Valdez in Alaska's Prince William Sound will be used to buy land and protect critical wildlife habitat in the affected area, Commerce Secretary Ronald H. Brown told Congress today.

Brown's comment was in testimony in behalf of the Clinton administration before the House Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee. He spoke as the representative of a three-member cabinet level board of trustees overseeing restoration of fish and wildlife populations and other natural resources damaged by the oil spill. Other members are Mike Espy, secretary of agriculture, and Bruce Babbitt, secretary of the interior.

"We are fully committed to expediting the restoration process to the greatest extent possible," Brown said. "Our goal is to bring greater protection for fish and wildlife." He said the \$25 million will be spent in fiscal years 1993-94.

Exxon agreed in 1991 to pay \$125 million to Alaska and the federal government in settlement of criminal charges relating to the tanker grounding, with \$50 million specified for federal restoration projects in the state.

"I am pleased that the three departments have worked together as the people's trustees," said Espy. "The \$25 million we spend on habitat acquisition and restoration is one way we can demonstrate that we are serious about putting right the wrongs caused by the spill."

The three trustees had little difficulty on deciding how to allocate the \$25 million, said Babbitt.

"Since the settlement was first announced nearly 18 months ago, the public has overwhelmingly advocated prompt action to protect critical Alaskan habitat in order to restore wildlife populations," Babbitt said, "therefore the decision on how to spend these funds was quite clear."

The three federal agencies will concentrate on acquiring property for Kenai Fjords National Park, Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge, Maritime National Wildlife Refuge Islands, Chugach National Forest, among others.

Today's announcement complements joint federal-state programs to employ some \$900 million Exxon agreed to pay over a 10-year period as part of the 1991 civil settlement.

A draft restoration plan will be submitted for public review and comment later this spring. Protection of wildlife habitat will be central to it, the agencies said.

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NOTED TO EDITORS: The release was originally issued today by the U.S. Department of Commerce on their letterhead (release No. G93.8).

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Release No. 0220.93

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NATIONAL TOBACCO INSPECTION SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO MEET APRIL 7

WASHINGTON, March 24--The U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Advisory Committee for Tobacco Inspection Services will meet April 7 in Raleigh, N.C.

L.P. Massaro, acting administrator of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, said the committee will elect new officers, analyze the financial status of the inspection program, recommend the rate of the user fee for the 1993-94 selling season, and discuss other related issues.

The 14-member committee advises the secretary of agriculture on the level of inspection services to be maintained and the fees to be set for the services.

The meeting, which is open to the public, will begin at 1:30 p.m. at the Tobacco Division, AMS, USDA, Flue-Cured Tobacco Stabilization Corporation Building, 1306 Annapolis Drive, Raleigh, N.C.

Those wishing to address the committee should contact the Director, Tobacco Division, AMS, Room 502 Annex, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, D.C. 20090-6456; tel. (202) 205-0567.

Written comments may be submitted to the same address before or after the meeting, or may be left with the chairman of the advisory committee at the meeting.

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Release No. 0221.93

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NEW OAT LINE SURVIVES WINTER FREEZING AND THAWING

WASHINGTON, March 25--Oat breeders can get a new breeding line with the highest winter hardiness yet, say U.S. Department of Agriculture scientists.

Winter hardiness refers to a plant's tolerance not only to low temperatures but also to temperature variations. "We want farmers in northern states to stand a better chance of planting oats in the fall that can survive winter and be ready to harvest before the next summer's drought takes its toll," said David P. Livingston of USDA's Agricultural Research Service.

A mid-winter thaw, followed by a hard freeze, does more damage to plants than constant low temperatures, he said. Plants also must contend with fluctuating ground moisture and attacks by diseases such as snow mold.

The new breeding line, Pennline 40, is the result of 20 years of field, laboratory and greenhouse studies, said Livingston, with ARS' Pasture Systems and Watershed Management Laboratory, State College, Pa. He said winter-hardy commercial varieties bred using Pennline 40 could be available in five to 10 years.

This could free northern oat growers from a dilemma, according to Livingston. Severe winter cold often kills young oat seedlings planted in the fall, but summer heat and drought can severely reduce yield of spring-planted oats, he said.

"New winter-hardy commercial varieties of oats would allow farmers in more northerly areas to successfully grow fall-planted oats with less chance of losing the crop over winter," said Livingston.

Farmers prefer fall-planted oats because they garner top dollar in the market place and allow them to "double crop," that is, grow more than one crop on a field in the same year.

In field tests, Pennline 40 withstood central Pennsylvania winters better than Wintok, the most winter hardy commercial cultivar, he said.

ARS scientists began field tests with 115 strains planted in the fall of 1973. For the next five years, seeds from plants that survived winter were planted the next fall.

Seeds from the final 324 survivors were planted in lab growth chambers, and 2-3 week old plants were frozen for 8 hours at 23 degrees F. The 43 survivors were moved to a greenhouse for more winter testing and seed propagation. Pennline 40 emerged as the only suitable line for release to breeders.

"Field tests in 1986, 1990 and 1991 showed that Pennline 40 had greater winter hardiness than all other lines tested," said Livingston.

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NOTE TO EDITOR: For details, contact David P. Livingston, research agronomist, USDA ARS, University Park, Pa. 16802. Telephone (814) 865-1141.

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Release No. 0222.93

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\$455 MILLION IN USDA'S RURAL HOME LOAN FUNDS RELEASED EARLY

WASHINGTON, March 25--Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy announced today the U.S. Department of Agriculture will release \$455 million for rural housing loans ahead of schedule to meet demand and help boost the economy.

"These funds were originally scheduled for use in the third and fourth quarters of this fiscal year," he said. "By making them all available now, we can take advantage of the coming construction season to provide decent homes for more than 30,000 people with modest incomes, and give the rural economy a lift at the same time."

The funds represent the remainder of the \$1.3 billion appropriated for USDA's Farmers Home Administration single-family housing direct loan program for fiscal year 1993.

"Home building in the rural areas and small towns puts money in the pockets of workers, suppliers and contractors--money that stays in the community," Espy said.

"New construction adds to the local tax base, more people move out of substandard housing, and everyone benefits."

The FmHA single-family home loan portfolio includes more than 700,000 borrowers with loans totaling almost \$19 billion. The agency is a major source of credit for rural residents with low and very-low incomes.

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Release No. 0223.93
 Kendra Pratt (301) 436-4898
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ALASKA DEFEATS PSEUDORABIES; OTHER STATES UPGRADE STATUS

WASHINGTON, March 25--Alaska is now the third state free of the livestock disease pseudorabies, a U.S. Department of Agriculture official said today.

"Alaskan pork producers and animal health officials have banded together to defeat this highly contagious swine disease," said Billy G. Johnson, deputy administrator of veterinary services in USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

Alaska, Maine and Utah are the only three states that have achieved Stage V status in the State-Federal-Industry Cooperative Pseudorabies Eradication Program. Additionally, in the last three months, Arkansas advanced from Stage III to Stage IV; Tennessee, Oklahoma and Oregon advanced from Stage II to Stage III; and 69 counties in Indiana advanced from Stage II to Stage III.

Johnson said states participating in the eradication program progress from Stage I to Stage V, which represents official recognition as being free of pseudorabies. Stage I is preparation. Stage II is control. Stage III is mandatory clean-up of all pseudorabies-infected herds. Stage IV is surveillance to make sure no infection remains. Stage V is achieved if a state in Stage IV goes for one year without finding an infected swine herd.

Pseudorabies is a viral disease most prevalent in swine, often causing newborn piglets to die. Older pigs can survive infection and be carriers of the virus for life. Other animals, such as cattle, sheep, dogs and cats, can become infected. In these species, pseudorabies can cause death quickly.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: The status of the various states in the pseudorabies eradication program is as follows:

--Stage I: Delaware, Florida, Iowa, Maryland, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Vermont, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

--Stage II: California, Idaho, Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Missouri, Nebraska, Pennsylvania, South Dakota and Washington.

--Stage II/III: Michigan, Indiana, Minnesota and North Carolina.

--Stage III: Alabama, Colorado, Georgia, Montana, Tennessee, Oregon, Nevada, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia and Wisconsin.

--Stage IV: Arizona, Arkansas, Connecticut, Hawaii, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New Mexico, New York and Wyoming.

--Stage V: Maine, Alaska and Utah.

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Release No. 0224.93
 Janise Zygmunt (202) 720-6734
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USDA ANNOUNCES PREVAILING WORLD MARKET PRICE AND USER MARKETING CERTIFICATE PAYMENT RATE FOR UPLAND COTTON

WASHINGTON, March 25--Tom VonGarlem, acting executive vice president of USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation, today announced the prevailing world market price, adjusted to U.S. quality and location (adjusted world price), for Strict Low Middling (SLM) 1-1/16 inch (micronaire 3.5-3.6 and 4.3-4.9, strength 24-25 grams per tex) upland cotton (base quality) and the coarse

count adjustment (CCA) in effect from 5:00 p.m. today through 3:59 p.m. Thursday, April 1. The user marketing certificate payment rate announced today is in effect from 12:01 a.m. Friday, Mar. 26, through midnight Thursday, April 1.

The Agricultural Act of 1949, as amended, provides that the AWP may be further adjusted if: (a) the AWP is less than 115 percent of the current crop year loan rate for base quality upland cotton, and (b) the Friday through Thursday average price quotation for the lowest-priced U.S. growth as quoted for Middling (M) 1-3/32 inch cotton, C.I.F. northern Europe (USNE price) exceeds the Northern Europe (NE) price. The maximum allowable adjustment is the difference between the USNE price and the NE price.

A further adjustment to this week's calculated AWP may be made in accordance with this provision. The calculated AWP is 91 percent of the 1992 upland cotton base quality loan rate, and the USNE price exceeds the NE price by 2.12 cents per pound. Following are the relevant calculations:

I.	Calculated AWP	47.40 cents per pound
	1992 Base Loan Rate	52.35 cents per pound
	AWP as a Percent of Loan Rate	91
II.	USNE Price	63.20 cents per pound
	NE Price	<u>-61.08</u> cents per pound
	Maximum Adjustment Allowed	2.12 cents per pound

Based on a consideration of the U.S. share of world exports, the current level of cotton export sales and cotton export shipments, and other relevant data, no further adjustment to this week's calculated AWP will be made.

This week's AWP and coarse count adjustment are determined as follows:

Adjusted World Price

NE Price	61.08
Adjustments:	
Average U.S. spot market location	11.82
SLM 1-1/16 inch cotton	1.55
Average U.S. location	0.31
Sum of Adjustments	<u>- 13.68</u>
Calculated AWP	47.40
Further AWP adjustment	<u>- 0</u>
ADJUSTED WORLD PRICE	47.40 cents/lb.

Coarse Count Adjustment

NE Price	61.08
NE Coarse Count Price	<u>- 57.62</u>
	3.46
Adjustment to SLM 1-1/32 inch cotton	<u>- 3.95</u>
	<u>- 0.49</u>
COARSE COUNT ADJUSTMENT.....	0 cents/lb.

Because the AWP is below the 1991 and 1992 base quality loan rates of 50.77 and 52.35 cents per pound, respectively, the loan repayment rate during this period is equal to the AWP, adjusted for the specific quality and location plus applicable interest and storage charges. The AWP will continue to be used to determine the value of upland cotton that is obtained in exchange for commodity certificates.

Because the AWP is below the 1992-crop loan rate, cash loan deficiency payments will be paid to eligible producers who agree to forgo obtaining a price support loan with respect to the 1992 crop. The payment rate is equal to the difference between the loan rate and the AWP. Producers are allowed to obtain a loan deficiency payment on a bale-by-bale basis.

The USNE price has exceeded the NE price by more than 1.25 cents per pound for four consecutive weeks and the AWP has not exceeded 130 percent of the 1992 crop year base quality loan rate in any week of the 4-week period. As a result, the user marketing certificate payment rate is 0.87 cents per pound. This rate is applicable for bales opened by domestic users and for cotton contracts entered into by exporters for delivery prior to September 30, 1993. Relevant data used in determining the user marketing certificate payment rate are summarized below:

Week	For the Thursday Period Ending	USNE Price	NE Price	USNE Minus NE	User Certificate Payment Rate 1/
	
			cents per pound		
1	Mar. 4, 1993	65.30	61.62	3.68	2.43
2	Mar. 11, 1993	65.25	61.71	3.54	2.29
3	Mar. 18, 1993	65.40	61.90	3.50	2.25
4	Mar. 25, 1993	63.20	61.08	2.12	0.87

1/ USNE price minus NE price minus 1.25 cents.

Next week's AWP, CCA and user marketing certificate payment rate will be announced on Thursday, April 1.



Release No. 0225.93
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Diane O'Connor (202) 720-4026

USDA TARGETS CHAD FOR WHEAT FLOUR AND DJIBOUTI FOR MILK POWDER

WASHINGTON, March 25--The U.S. Department of Agriculture has added Chad to the Sub-Saharan Africa regional initiative for wheat flour under the Export Enhancement Program. It has also added Djibouti to the Africa regional allocation for milk powder under the Dairy Export Incentive Program.

According to Christopher Goldthwait, acting general sales manager for USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service, sales of these commodities will be made through normal commercial channels at competitive world prices. Sales will be facilitated through the payment of bonuses of USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation.

The EEP wheat flour allocation is valid until June 30, and the DEIP milk powder allocation is valid until Dec. 30, as provided in the invitations for offers. Details of the programs will be issued in the near future.

For more information call Randy Baxter, (202) 720-5540, or Larry McElvain, (202) 720-6211.



Release No. 0226.93
Steve Kinsella (202) 720-4623

ESPY TO VISIT PACIFIC NORTHWEST

WASHINGTON, March 25--Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy will visit sites in Washington and Oregon March 28 and 29 to get a firsthand look at timber issues in the Pacific Northwest.

Espy will travel to Washington and Oregon beginning Sunday, March 28, to meet with many of the involved parties and interests from the region to gather input for the upcoming Forest Conference to be held April 2 in Portland, Ore.

"Basically, I'm going to listen and to learn. The visit will provide me with a firsthand understanding of these issues and how the people and communities have been affected by the related gridlock," said Espy.

Espy's schedule includes visits to Aberdeen, Wash., and the Olympic Peninsula on Sunday afternoon and Portland in the evening. On Monday, he will visit Vancouver, Wash., and the Gifford Pinchot National Forest in the morning, the Olympic Peninsula in the afternoon, and Olympia, Wash., in the evening.

Further details of Secretary Espy's schedule will be released Friday.

Espy said the conference will focus on how the controversy over forest management has affected the people and the communities of the Northwest and northern California, the future of the old-growth forest system, and what are the best ideas for developing new, innovative and creative approaches for addressing the economic challenges.

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Release No. 0227.93
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ESPY SAYS NEW FOOD STAMP NUMBERS PROVE NEED FOR STIMULUS PACKAGE

WASHINGTON, March 26--Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy said today an all-time high number of Americans received food stamps in January, proving the need to take steps to stimulate the economy.

According to figures released today by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, 26.83 million Americans received food stamps in January, a 213,000 increase from December 1992. These figures represent the highest-ever level of participation since the program originated in 1964.

"The need for food assistance has risen so rapidly that one in ten Americans received food stamps this January. Unfortunately, that's a new record that even beat the previous high set in December," Espy said.

"These new numbers demonstrate this recovery is toothless because it has carried with it no major increase in jobs or family income. Despite a few hopeful signs, food-stamp participation continues to grow. To create jobs, Congress must pass President Clinton's economic stimulus package.

"American families can't wait for some mythical economic cycle to improve--they need immediate action from their government. They need change right now," Espy said.

The recession of 1990/91 and a weak economy since then have brought millions of people onto the food stamp program. Over eight million people have been added to the program since January 1989, with over 4.8 million added since January 1991. Nearly 1.8 million more people received food stamps this January than the previous January.

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